DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE THINKERS

Critical & Creative Thinking Series

A critical education addresses the need for content mastery and deep learning. It appeals to reason and evidence. It encourages students to discover as well as to process information. It provides occasions in which students think their own way to conclusions, defend positions on live issues, consider a wide variety of points of view, analyze concepts, theories, and explanations, clarify issues and conclusions, solve problems, transfer ideas to new contexts, examine assumptions, assess alleged facts, explore implications and consequences, and increasingly come to terms with the contradictions and inconsistencies of their own thought and experience (Paul, Richard. Critical Thinking: What Every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Changing World, 1990).

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT BIO-ETHICAL ISSUES

A workshop designed to enhance awareness and comprehension of some of the issues considered in the area of Bio-ethics, to examine what general principles may be relevant to such issues, and to explore pedagogical methods for discussing these issues critically.

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INTER-CULTURAL AND INTER-RACIAL ISSUES

Multi-cultural education, if it is to be effective in reducing prejudice, should teach us how to respond to relevant reasons and rational considerations. An appreciation of different cultures and knowledge of customs and rituals, although important, are simply not enough to change what are often deeply ingrained patterns of thinking. Prejudiced thinking involves engaging in faulty assumptions, stereotyping and selective perception. Prejudice reduction cannot merely entail the presentation of alternative information and experiences, but the development of different modes of thinking. In this "hands-on" workshop, participants will become familiar with strategies for fostering critical thinking skills and dispositons about inter-cultural and inter-racial issues.

EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING STRATEGIES

The quality and type of thinking a student is motivated to do is triggered by the kind of question posed. Penetrating questions stimulate students' thinking and help re-route and re-direct the thinking process. This is a "hands-on" workshop for teachers who want to help their students ask better questions and who want to learn how to pose more penetrating questions of their students.

DEVELOPING CREATIVE THINKERS

This workshop is designed to sensitize participants to some of the major blocks to creative thinking as well as provide them with concrete strategies to overcome these blocks. Participants will become familiar with some of the major approaches to the development of creative thinking and will experience a number of group and individual techniques that have proven effective in producing fresh and innovative ideas in a wide range of fields. This workshop is intended for those interested in generating and implementing new ideas and helping others to do so.

TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Critical Thinking has characteristics that cut across the curriculum. Each field recognizes the importance of analyzing issues, synthesizing information, evaluating arguments and forming independent judgements. This workshop will emphasize key practical strategies for the fostering of critical thinking skills. Participants will engage in a variety of activities drawn from a variety of disciplines.

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING MEDIA LITERACY

This workshop will help participants to learn how to think critically about the content and structure of the mass media; learning to explore how media reality is "constructed" and how this construct influences our perceptions of the world. The workshop will explore ways in which the media hinder the development of critical thinking and will suggest practical strategies to increase students' awareness of everyday obstacles to independent and objective inquiry.

USING AUDIO–VISUAL AIDS TO ENHANCE CREATIVE WRITING

Images and sounds trigger certain unconscious reactions and associations which can significantly enhance the creative writing process. To think creatively entails utilizing a variety of associations. Like a kaleidoscope, the more pieces we gather, the more possible patterns we can produce. It is the unusual recombinations of these associations that result in creativity. This workshop is designed to help teachers develop innovative techniques for utilizing images and sounds in order to elicit the creative writing potential of their students.

WORKSHOP LEADER:

OLIVIA ROVINESCU, (M.A. Philosophy of Education, McGill University) is the Director of the Lacolle Centre for Educational Innovation at Concordia University. She has taught in the Faculty of Education at McGill University and at several community colleges. She is co–author of Words on Work (Globe Modern Curriculum Press, 1981) and has written several articles on Critical and Creative Thinking.